

BOOK REVIEW

SPECIES PLANTARUM. Carl Linnaeus. A facsimile of the first edition of 1753. With an introduction by W. T. Stearn. Vol. I. London. Ray Society, 1957. 50s.

The first edition of the *Species Plantarum* has been chosen by international agreement as the starting point of botanical nomenclature. As the book itself is a rare one and as earlier facsimiles have been long out of print, this publication is one of great importance. The present work is, however, much more than a facsimile of the original text. In an introduction of 173 pages, there is contained a great wealth of information about Linnaeus himself, his works, and about the origins and sources of the *Species Plantarum*. The introduction is, indeed, a remarkable example of really clear condensation of a very large mass of information in small compass.

In the more general portion of the introduction there is a short account of the life of Linnaeus, a bibliography of his botanical works including a section on the *Amoenitates Academiae* with a list of the dissertation and their authors, and sections on Linnaeus' system of classification and on the *Hortus Cliffortianus*. In the part more closely connected with the *Species Plantarum*, there are sections on the introduction of binomial nomenclature and some of the contemporary reactions to it, and on the sources used by Linnaeus, together with a list of references to those quoted in abbreviated form.

There are useful chapters on the typification of Linnaean genera and species with some notes on the difficulties that can arise. There is also an account of the Linnaean herbaria and of the material known to have been used by Linnaeus. In this part there is conveyed a warning to workers that the collection housed at the Linnaean Society in London cannot be regarded as at all necessarily typifying the *Species Plantarum* nor in all cases expressing its author's views.

There are useful glossaries of the geographical terms used in the original work and of abbreviations and symbols. There are also notes on the various editions of the *Species Plantarum*. Included here are facsimiles of the cancelled pages of the first edition which are of historical interest even if of no nomenclatorial importance. There is a bibliography to each section in the introduction and a full index.

The text reproduced in this volume covers the first 500 pages. A second volume completing the work is promised in the very near future. There is an index to the part reproduced which includes references to the 5th edition of *Genera Plantarum* (1754).

The printing throughout is excellent, that of the facsimile part sharp and easily read. The volume opens easily at any place. There is a coloured frontispiece of the Wedgewood medallion portrait of Linnaeus and several reproductions of woodcuts from Linnaeus' works.

The volume is one that no botanical library can at all afford to be without and with its wealth of information should have an appeal to botanists in general. In any case all must feel under a debt of gratitude to the Ray Society for making it available at so very reasonable a price.

R. S. ADAMSON.